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MY AUNT:

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PETIT COMEDY,

IN TWO ACTS,

Performed at the Theatres Boston, New-York and London.

CORRECTED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK, BOSTON.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	Boston.
Dashall, - - - - -	Mr. Wallack.
Frederick, - - - - -	Mr. Pelby.
Rattle, - - - - - -	Mr. Bray.
Soberlove, - - - - -	Mr. Williams.
Mrs. Corbett, - - - -	Mrs. Barnes.
Emma, - - - - -	Miss Jones.

MY AUNT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room at a country Inn.—The room in great disorder.—Cards on the floor and scattered about the tables.—Candle broke in Candlestick.*

Enter FREDERICK *and* RATTLE.

Rattle. (*Entering*) House! house! house! bless my soul!—if the house was in a blaze I could bawl no louder! What, nobody to take us in?—The first Inn I ever knew, your honor, that was'nt ready to *take-in* travellers.

Frederick. Well, well, we have got possession of this room, and hence will I despatch my letter immediately to my inestimable Emma.

Rat. Your inestimable Emma will be the death of your inestimable servant if we go on at this rate!—Post here!—Post there, and wait for the Post no where!—Never easy a moment: Lovers I'm sure must be hung on springs, like Mail Coaches, or they could never bear so much jolting, and quick travelling without shaking to pieces.

Fred. Here's the letter: you must approach Mrs. Corbett's house cautiously.

Rat. Cautiously! that's the first word, Sir, that implies a slow motion that I've heard from your lips for this twelve month.—But 'twill be prudent, for should the old lady guess me, for Cupid's Embassador, and detect us in this part of the world, the gentleman who 'tis said, is to marry Miss Emma, may prove rather an awkward addition to our present small (tho' agreeable) party.

Fred. Courage man, I fear him not—but see our host.

Enter SOBERLOVE.

Soberlove. Sarvent, Gentlemen—beg a thousand pardons—fear I kept you waiting—lost a spoon—looking for it.

Rat. I thought you might have lost your ears.

Fred. Why your house seems in disorder, friend.

Sober. Travellers playing here all night—little out of sorts to be sure—*but that's no affair of mine!*

Fred. Yes—I see the field is still covered with the implements of war.

Sober. Ah!—don't name it, Sir, don't name it, Sir, heard the shouts of the victor, and the cries of the wounded all over the house, poor young gentleman—quite ruined!—done!—smashed! He was going to Mrs. Corbett's at the Manor-house, hard by—*but that's no affair of mine.*

Fred. To Mrs. Corbett's! should this be my rival?

Sober. The young gentleman arrived quite late—dark night—lost his road—t'other gentleman here before him—both bragged—laid bets—asked for cards—fell to—played and swore, till last comer, lost his all.—Money, watch, gold seals, and snuff-box, and for aught I know, hopes, and happiness—*but that's no affair of mine!*

Rat. Poor gentleman, he may now travel o'dark nights without fear of robbers.

Sober. The young gentleman's now trying to take a nap.

Rat. Young gentlemen who have lost their all are very apt to have sound slumbers: poor folks sleep amazingly!

Fred. Fatal passion for gaming! 'tis the poison of the soul.

Rat. Fatal passion for women!—'tis very bad for the valets.—Fatal passion for wine!—'tis very *good* for Inn-keepers, never speak ill of your friends.

Rat. Right.

(*Within.*) House! house. (*Hand-bell rung without.*)

Sober. Coming!

Fred. Let me have a room immediately.

Rat. And breakfast by all means! breakfast!

(*Within.*) House I say. (*Bell rings again.*)

Sober. Coming! In a moment gentlemen.

[*Exit.*

Fred. Tell me, Rattle, this unlucky gamester, Is not he my rival think you?

Rat. Bless us what a vast conception!—That had never entered my thick sconce!

Fred. You observe he was going to Mrs. Corbett's, and now I recollect, Emma in her last letter mentions my rival as a wild young fellow, addicted to wine and gaming.

Rat. So much the better! This backs us better than a lord's letter of recommendation: he won't dare shew his face to the lady, 'till he comes to the Manor-house just in time to find us lately married to his mistress.—It'll do, while he like a hermit is moralizing here in his cell, we like successful campaigners will scour the country, storm the castle, establish our batteries, and if put to the push, who knows but we may carry the fort in the very teeth of the enemy.

Fred. Shall we be fortunate in our enterprise?

Rat. I'll tell you in a moment sir.—Let's consult the oracle of the ladies—(*Takes cards from the table*) my mother was a fortune-teller, and taught me to read fate in dreams—marks—lines—cards—and coffee cups.

Fred. Absurdity!

Rat. Now, mind, Sir, I'm going to open the book of fate.

Fred. Stupidity!

Rat. Vastly well, Sir, I see you're an unbeliever—(*laying out cards.*) Now, Sir, let's see if you are to have the lady.

Enter SOBERLOVE, *with breakfast*, &c.

Sober. Room's ready Sir.—This way. [*Exit.*

Rat. Breakfast! I'll tell my master's fortune in the tea cup. [*Exit after Soberlove.*

Fred. Hope, thou dear nursling of love, I invoke thee: lead me on, and courage and enterprise shall be thy associates.

SONG.

WHEN sorrow loads the lover's breast
Each sigh his anguish proves,
No balm affords such soothing rest
As thoughts of her he loves.—
In fancy's dream he holds her dear
But fearing soon to part,
He sadly drops the hapless tear
For her that owns his heart.

2d.

Should worldly cares my portion be
Where'er I chance to roam,
In every clime I'd think of thee
Of thee and of my home.

Oh! doubt not Love, I'd e'er forget
Tho' doomed from thee to part,
But ever think with fond regret,
On her, who owns my heart.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Front of the Inn.*

Enter SOBERLOVE.

Here John! Chambermaid! mind the house! There's a coach stopped—Ho!—I see Mrs. Corbett, from the Manor-house and the lovely Miss Emma, what the devil brings them.

Enter MRS. CORBETT *and* EMMA.

Perhaps some affair of mine.—Sarvent, ladies: too proud of this honor: any commands for your humble servant.

Mrs. C. Pray, Mr. Soberlove, inform me if you have not a young man here?

Sober. A young man.—Lord ma'am!

Mrs. C. Who last night ruined himself at play with some strangers at your Inn.

Sober. Too true ma'am—but could'nt help it—(how the devil did she hear of it) brought cards with 'em—never keep such things at the Golden Fleece.

Mrs. C. Do you know whither he was going?

Sober. Oh yes, ma'am—was going to you forsooth—a fine spark!—seems to want a sober man, like me, to look after him sadly!—Ah! poor young man!—As mad as Chimney Sweeps on a May day!—A sad young man,—*but that's no affair of mine.*

Mrs. C. I've heard enough—where is he?

Sober. In that room ma'am—just dropt into a doze—wanted sleep sadly—step and wake him directly. (*Going.*)

Mrs. C. On no account—he must needs require rest—and when he wakes, by no means tell him I am here!—I wish to surprise him, for I fear shame would prevent him now from seeing me.

Sober. Shame!—fancy not ma'am—only—*that can be no affair of mine*—please to walk in ma'am.

Mrs. C. Enough friend: tell the Coachman he need not put up.

Sober. Not put up!—No hay or corn!—Better put up ma'am.

Mrs. C. As you see fit.

Sober. Certainly, ma'am—put up by all means—not that it can be any affair of—only speak for the good of the cattle ma'am. [*Exit.*

Emma. I have not yet ventured my dearest madam, to ask the reason of this early visit to an Inn.

Mrs. C. You have no suspicion then, that I come to seek my nephew.

Emma. Your nephew, madam?

Mrs. C. He has passed the night in gaming—and has lost every thing—one of my neighbours who by some accident learn't the story, and his name, came this morning to acquaint me with it.

Emma. And—you—did not prefer coming hither by yourself, madam. (*Sighing.*)

Mrs. C. I thought your beauty and sweetness, joined to my indulgence, might more easily tranquilize his mind and soften his despair.

Emma. Is it possible to find another Aunt whose clemency—

Mrs. C. I own my weakness.—But, of all my family, this nephew, alone, is left me, and him I have not seen since his infancy.—My ready forgiveness, when I see his sorrow and repentance will ensure his future good

conduct: and you, my dear Emma, will prove your affection for me, by accepting, my nephew as your husband.

Emma. (*Half aside*) Oh, Frederick, and must I then for life renounce thee.

Mrs. C. What says, my Emma?

Emma. I ought—I must obey you: but the unfortunate Frederick—

Mrs. C. Frederick!—How Emma! do you then love this young man, whom you met in London during the only period when you have been long absent from me?

Emma. Oh, madam, we still blush to acknowledge what is the dearest pride of our hearts:—but, my gratitude to you, can find no competition in my bosom.

Enter SOBERLOVE.

Sober. All's ready, ladies—your servants wait ma'am.

Mrs. C. Come, dear Emma, we shall soon face this imprudent young man who has drawn us hither. In the mean time be assured, as I have ever sought your happiness, I will not now urge you to be miserable; but let him have a fair chance, and if you cannot think you can esteem and love him, you never shall be his.

[*Exit Mrs. C. and Emma.*

Sober. That way, ladies—follow that passage, ma'am—have the honor to attend myself, directly—very full of company at present—but that's no affair—Oh yes—that *is* an affair of mine.

Rat. (*without.*) *Waiter! Waiter!*

Sober. Coming, Sir—they call ma'am—Sarvent, ladies—Coming Sir. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A room in the Inn.*

Enter RATTLE.

Somehow or other I must see this spark who has ruined himself—'twould be strange enough if, as my master guesses, he should prove our rival—mum—who's here.

Enter DASHALL, *singing and yawning.*

Dash. Well, upon my soul after such a night, I've contrived to make a decent nap of it, (*Yawns,*) and now my head's clear, and my eyes open, I must begin to think, how the devil I'm to get out of this damned scrape that I have shuffled myself into.

Rat. The very man no doubt—looks very like a young gentleman who lost all his money last night, and has just woke to the agreeable recollection of it.

Dashall seeing Rattle.

Dash. Who's that fellow?—If I a'nt mistaken—

Rat. Dear me, this young gentleman is very like—

Dash. I think I've seen him in the army.—

Rat. By the Lord, 'tis the amiable young Captain, who one day honor'd me with a kicking, for bringing up a coal scuttle instead of some shaving powder.

Dash. Harkee fellow!—Surely I've seen that uncommon frontispiece of yours somewhere? A'nt you in the service—

Rat. Of Captain Frederick Vincent, at your service. And, now I recollect, you are Capt. Dashall, I believe.

Dash. What! Vincent! my old brother officer here! so much the better: he shall help me out of a trifling difficulty.

Rat. Trifling difficulty!—Why, Lord, Sir, are you the young madman, who they say lost all his money here last night?

Dash. The same!—yes, I'm ruined a little—fairly stripped—utterly undone! (*Sings.*)

Rat. Well! for a man who is just utterly undone, you are the merriest gentleman that ever I met with.

Dash. Sighing and groaning and the mortification of morality, man, will neither restore my snuff-box—my cash—my credit—or my curricle.

Rat. What, your curricle gone?

Dash. Yes!—it followed my horses.

Rat. And your horses too?

Dash. Yes! they ran away with my curricle.

Rat. Mercy on us! so that you, who had before a troop of dragoons must now be content to be a *foot* Captain.

Dash. I've settled my scheme, 'till my pocket receives a reinforcement—here will I repose me—rich in reveries—laugh—sing—dance and whistle: and rail at the world like Diogenes in his tub.

Rat. And you have already sent to your friends, no doubt.

Dash. I always think of them, the moment I'm in distress—the worst of all is, that I'm expected at the neighbouring Manor-house and in my present plight, I dare not present myself.

Rat. (*Aside.*) Our rival by Jupiter!

Dash. But, what the devil do I stand chattering thus for?—Run, tell your master, I am here, and that I'll wait on him directly.

Rat. Yes. Sir. (*Aside.*) Wait on him!—much upon the same errand, that a dun waits on a debtor.—Sir, I'll acquaint my master that you do him the honor to—(*Aside*) want his purse immediately. [*Exit.*

Dash. If he fail me—what the devil shall I do? Suppose I make a bold push at this silly old Aunt, and tell her a cock and bull story about footpads on the road?—Why she won't believe a word on't.—Then what a figure shall I cut? I think I see myself already at her door: An Officer of Dragoons plodding away with a great crabstick in his hand, knocking at the clumsy door of the old Manor-house, like a neighbourly visitor,

who comes mumping for a dinner—Oh!—Lord!—Oh Lord!—'twill never do.—My Aunt will smoke me—the young lady 'll dismiss me, and I shall have nothing left, but to pull my neckcloth a little tighter! and hang myself out of the way at once. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Gallery with two doors. Three chairs—Cards on table—Enter Frederick from door—Music—Listening.*

Fred. I heard a voice so like Emma's, and yet 'tis so improbable—Hark!

DUETT.

(EMMA *Sings within.*)

By the magnetic needle's force,
The Pilot knows to steer his course:
So should the heart by love impress'd,
Be guided to this faithful breast.—

Fred. By the rich sweets she round her throws,
We know when we are near the rose:
So can the heart prophetic prove,
When near the object of its love.—

DUO.

Alas! 'tis fancy's glowing vision cheers,
The voice resembles, but no form appears.

Enter DASHALL *and* RATTLE.

Fred. (*Comes forward.*) What, Dashall—is it possible? Didn't you hear a voice?

Dash. Yes—Did you?

Fred. A most delicious one—

Dash. It was mine.—

Fred. Yours!—Psha!—but how is this! I cannot believe it to be my old friend Dashall.

Dash. Yes—'tis I—Dick Dashall—ruined—robbed—you see indeed the most miserable undone dog in—but how are you my boy?

Fred. Still gaming I find.—If you knew—

Dash. Prithee, no preaching.—I've renounced play for these six weeks, and but for these abominable travellers—Oh! I've had my lesson.—I'm now an altered man.—

Rat. Yes—you're altered from a *rich* man to a *poor* man.

Fred. You ought to think more seriously.—

Dash. Zounds! I'm as miserable, and as melancholy as a lover by moonlight: but tell me when you saw the lovely Julia?

Fred. The circumstances in which you stand—

Dash. Are damn'd bad.—

Rat. (*aside.*) Bad enough.

Fred. Prithee, be serious, have you no resources?

Dash. Let me see!—no!—none that I recollect—unless—yes—I'll tell you one—you shall lend me sixty guineas.

Rat. (*Aside to Fred.*) Say, you hav'nt got sixty pence—Lie!

Fred. With all my heart, if I could, but the small sum I have about me won't—

Dash. Say no more!—I know your friendship—am sure you would if you could—and tho' you can't, I'm nevertheless equally—no not *equally*, but very *greatly* obliged to you.—

Fred. On my honor Dashall your situation excites my pity: what in fortune's name will you do here in this miserable Inn?

Rat. (*half-aside.*) Starve!

Dash. No, Sir, I will not starve.—(*mimicing Rattle.*) I'll philosophize!—calculate odds and chances—curse cards and dice—fancy I've renounced the world

and all its wicked vanities, now I've no longer the means of enjoying them.—Run down the times, and write a treatise on the instability of all sublunary things.—

Rat. (*aside.*) Very pretty pastime, for a young buck of the first order.—

Dash. Let me see—all this time I believe I hav'nt told you, I'm going to be married?

Fred. and Rat. Married!

Dash. Ha! ha! ha—My dear fellow 'tis the paragon of all matrimonial manœuvres—A rich old aunt of mine, who I believe, I never saw, has contrived it all—she wrote to my father—he answered—she replied—he rejoined—all was settled: they condescended to let me know the arrangement and sent me the miniature of the Damsel, set in beautiful brilliants.—The brilliants *were* beautiful, I assure you, and I received it with all becoming transport.—

Fred. And thus the business was concluded?

Dash. I promised to marry—took leave, full of good resolutions, and arrived here late last night, and woke them all.—'Twas too late to go to Mrs. Corbett's—met some pleasant company—we supped—sung—laughed—played—drank—swore—and *I* lost all.——Money—Horses—Curricle—Patience and good resolutions, and all I have left, is this lovely lass—*without* the diamonds—(*Shows the miniature—Frederick takes it.*) The girl's well enough—but Zounds! how you stare at it?

Fred. Oh, my friend! 'tis such a striking likeness!

Dash. Hey!—the Devil!—do you know her?

Fred. Know her!—Yes!—that is—not that I *know* her—only that 'tis so like a lovely young creature in—

Rat. (*getting to the centre.*) In Dorsetshire, Sir, that my master is desperately in love with!—

Dash. Oh!—like somebody you're in love with!—well, I wish you success with her, with all my heart—you lovers have a keen eye for a likeness!

Rat. (*aside.*) Yes, and a happy knack of lying!

Fred. How happy should I be to possess such a resemblance.

Dash. Good I'faith.—So you really think the thing of some value, without the brilliants.—

Fred. What would I not give to call it mine?

Rat. (*aside.*) My master's going to play the fool.—

Dash. Upon my soul, I neither know, nor care a piñ for the original.—

Fred. (*smiling.*) Suppose—suppose we strike a bargain!

Rat. (*aside.*) My poor master!

Dash. (*not understanding.*) A bargain!

Fred. Suppose, I buy it of you?

Dash. Oh, horrible!—sell a lady!—sell my wife!—Zounds, Fred. do you take me for a Jew or a Gypsy?

Rat. (*getting to centre.*) Ask pardon, Sir, but think my master's offer a very handsome one. (*aside to Fred.*) Offer him a guinea, Sir, the King's picture is as good as that, any time.

Fred. I dare say you would have played for it last night, if they'd have set a value against it?

Dash. Ha! ha! ha! a good idea upon my soul—to be sure I should.—

Fred. (*Laughing.*) Why should you?

Dash. Don't tempt me! my virtue's of the tottering sort—I always keep my resolutions, when I've no temptations to break them.—

Fred. You jest perhaps?—

Dash. Allons!—shall we cut cards—draw straws—race maggots—play at push-pin—head or tail—or—odd or even?

Rat. The Lord have mercy upon us! (*aside.*)

Fred. You are raving mad—but I never game, and to speak truth, I'm ashamed to begin.—

Dash. Both game and shame will soon be over.

Rat. (*aside to Fred.*) Better not, Sir—he's the devil incarnate!

Fred. (*to himself.*) Yet, if I could but obtain it—Come, I can but lose a certain sum, and—

Dash. You hesitate!—(*rings hand-bell on the table.*) bring cards and dice.—

Rat. But, my poor master—

Dash. (*pushing him off.*) Bring cards and dice.—

[*Exit Rattle.*

Fred. But what sum shall we set against the lady?

Dash. Look at it—observe how highly 'tis finished—how delicately touch'd—there's a pencil—there's red and white—flesh and blood—there's an eye—and the fellow to it—what a nose!—and lips you dog.—Heavens and earth, I begin to love it myself—a throat—what a throat—and a bosom—say no more—I can't part with it.—What d'ye think of fifty guineas?

Fred. What, fifty guineas for a miniature?

Dash. A girl of eighteen, with dark blue eyes—look at those eyes.—

Fred. Beautiful!—but these things—

Dash. The lips, pouting red, as if blushing for the kisses they solicit.—

Fred. Lovely.—

Dash. The bosom—soft as the down of the Cygnet, and fair as the untouched lilly—there apathy might be roused into transport—despair be lulled to repose, and care find a pillow of peace—Oh! I can't part with it.—

Enter RATTLE *with Cards and Dice.*

Fred. Enough.—(*takes dice.*) For fifty guineas.—

Dash. The lady's staked for fifty!

Rat. My poor master! (*They sit down to play.*)

DUETT AND DIALOGUE.

Fred. Now Fortune smile upon my lot,
Thy fav'ring hand my hopes presage—

Rat. I hope she will—I fear she'll not—
Her frowns will put me in a rage.—
Fred. Grant me the semblance of my fair—
Ratt. Our money and our patience spare.—
Fred. Grant me my fair.
Rat. Our money spare.
Dash. (*spoken.*) Allons!—the first throw!—Ten!
Fred. } Now chance be friendly to my } fate.—
Rat. } His }
Fred. (*throws.*) So!—six and two are only eight.—I lose!
Dash. Again?—
Rat. No more!
Fred. Double or quits!—
(*Dashall lifts purse and Watch, and holds them up in triumph. Scene closes.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter Dashall.

Well, after all—there's no life, like the life of a gamester!—play keeps his passions always on the stretch: 'tis a perpetual stimulus to keep them from stagnation: to banish ennui, and drive thought to the devil.—

Enter Rattle.

Rat. Ruin and Robbers!—Oh, sir, you're a lucky man, but you carry all your luck about you—you've brought none to us—you've stripped us—pillaged and plucked us like a pair of pigeons—oh miserable day!—as Chimney Sweeps on a May day!—A sad young man,—*but that's no affair of mine.*

Dash. I'm really as sorry as you can conceive that fortune should have been so favourable to me.—

Rat. What in the name of fortune is to become of us?

Dash. Do as I did, get drunk and forget it.—

Rat. You settle it easily—you're used to it—but we, who are people of regularity, sobriety, good manners, and strict morals—Oh, lord! oh, lord!

Dash. Be comforted! I may find means to console you both.—

Rat. Can you?—(*aside*) I've melted his iron heart, he's going to give back the money.—

Dash. Yes, 'tis a very liberal idea, I shall make these poor fellows quite happy.—

Rat. (*aside*) He meditates! Heaven send us comfort and pour the cordial of pity into his cogitations—Ha!—thinking no doubt, if he shall handsomely give us the whole, or only hand us over the half.—

Dash. It shall be so—Harkee friend—I am about to make a tremendous sacrifice—its hurts my fine feelings, but we don't live in this world for ourselves alone—here take it—carry your master this—this—this portrait.—

Rat. What—the miniature!

Dash. I make him a present of it!—

Rat. Crœsus!—what magnificence!—really, sir, your generosity—is so amazing—that—

Dash. I certainly am a very liberal fellow—don't you think so?

Rat. Oh yes, sir.—(*aside*) Liberal as a footpad, who takes your money and then obligingly presents you with the empty purse.

Dash. And now be pleased, worthy, sir, to shew me my horses.—

Rat. Your horses! Ha! ha! ha! that's a good one! You know, sir, you lost your horses, curricle—gold seals and snuff box.—

Dash. Meaning your master's.—

Rat. Our horses!

Dash. His that were—mine that are—

Rat. Are they gone too!—oh, my horses, my poor dear beasts!—this is the cruelest cut of all—It'll break my heart, sir, it will indeed.—I shall never get over the loss.—(*sobbing.*)

Dash. I like your sensibility honest fellow.—I've a great deal of sensibility myself—y-a-w—(*yawns*) Well, this miniature will certainly make you happy.—I must to the Manor-house—If my old aunt should hear of this prank, what the devil must I do?

Enter SOBERLOVE.

Sober. You must turn out.

Rat. It will be our turn next.

Sober. Advise you to pay your bill and begone.—

Dash. Why thou most impudent valet! dost think I'll endure the insolence of a little pert prig of a puppy like thee?—a quiz of a carricature, a fellow with a head like the frontispiece of an ugly Dutch pug? Begone!—

Sober. (*following Dash.*) Hey day!—tone's alter'd—poor man!—crack'd a little—*but that's no affair of mine*—Harkee mister—take a friend's advice—pay your bill or leave your portmanteau in pawn—but that's no affair of—yes, that *is* an affair of mine—any thing—only go—mum—I'm wise—better be off—mus'nt speak—only hint—better turn out quickly—or—

Rat. He'll turn him over to us presently.—

Dash. (*Jingling purse*) Aye!—stare wider!—Zounds!—the fellow's eyes will start out of his head—money you rogue—hard cash—enough to make a man stare now-a-days!

Sober. Oh, sir!—this is quite another affair—but bless us—how did you get it?

Dash. Why—that's no affair of yours.—Hey day!—tone's alter'd—harkee mister—take a friend's advice—mum—better be off—mus'nt speak—only hint—better turn out quickly or—I may kick you out—

(*Drives him off and exit.*)

Rat. There he goes to drink our healths in bumpers of claret, while we return the compliment in sour small beer, at best.—Curse him!—he robs us of our money, and very politely presents us with this piece of painted ivory.—(*addressing the miniature*) So you mean to stay with us ma'am, undoubtedly you do us a deal of honor: I hope you mean for to pay for your board: your eyes are vastly beautiful, but how much bread and butter will they buy us? not a breakfast!—your lips to be sure are lovely!—will they persuade people to trust us? not a penny!—your nose is a none-such—I don't think it'll smell roast beef at our board in a hurry!—Now then I'll away to my master with this crumb of comfort—this mite of consolation—this morsel of magnificence, that's to stop up the chinks of his empty purse, and calm the cravings of hungry despair.—Oh, dear! oh, dear!—what an up and down world is this!—when *down* as we are, devil a soul will know us—tho' when *we're up*—every one has a civil bow to bestow, till fashionable politeness becomes as great a *bore*, as the dunning of a creditor.—

SONG.

What a world do we live in good lack!
Up and down like a bucket we go!—
Full of friends, or no friends to our back,
Just as good or ill fortune we know.—
While a man's full of cash in the purse
Friends abound—Knaves surround—
Bowing—bending—giving—lending—
Gaping—scraping—all attending—
Presents sending!
All are mightily civil—odds curse!—
Dear sir, beware—that thoro' air
Do take this chair—you shall I swear—

Oh sir—don't stir—oh fie !—not I—
Sir I entreat, you'll keep your seat—
Indeed 'tis clear, you must sit here—
Do pray oblige in that, Oh, sir you've dropp'd your hat—
Then half a dozen stoop at once
The puppy's leather head, encounters one of lead !—
The critic jolts against the dunce
One blockhead jostles with another,
And all is bustle noise and pother,
Zounds ! sir, I'm dead ! Oh ! lord my toes !
You've broke my head !—you've broke my nose !—
Then bob for hats—and sticks and wigs—
Like scrambling cats, in whirligigs !—
Till disconcerted bruised and sore
Apologizing o'er and o'er !
Each courts the glass, adjusts his dress,
And curses modern politesse.—
Thus friends all surround us when fortune is kind,
But like her, when she leaves us, our friends are all blind. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the Inn.*

Enter MRS. CORBETT.

I must inform myself, if Dashall is yet risen—I long to know a nephew whom I have never seen since his infancy—who have we here? (*Retires.*)

Enter FREDERICK *disordered and* RATTLE.

Mrs. C. (*aside*) By his disorder and agitation it is impossible not to discover the unfortunate and repentant youth.—

Fred. (*looking at miniature*) Eternal must be the misery my self-reproaches will cause me.—

Rat. May the devil fly away with him that first contrived a dice box, if it was'nt the devil himself.

Fred. Still I possess the portrait of my beloved Emma.

Mrs. C. He speaks of Emma!—

Rat. Oh, yes, that precious portrait, will save us from starving no doubt.

Fred. Oh! Emma—you shall never quit the heart that adores you.—Here will I preserve you, as my only consolation thro' life.—

Mrs. C. How! then! he loves her!—

Fred. How shall I ever dare to see her? nor could ever look her respectable protectress in the face.—Her just severity would at once silence my pretensions or crush my hopes forever.—

Mrs. C. (*coming forward*) Do you not think that the mildness and affection of your aunt may pardon an error, of which you appear so deeply sensible.—

Fred. Madam!—*my* aunt!—I have no aunt.—

Mrs. C. Perhaps she is not lost to you.—Your Aunt-

Fred. My Aunt—(*aside to Rat.*)

Rat. (*aside to Fred.*) If you can find an aunt disposed to help us, for heaven's sake adopt her immediately.—

Mrs. C. She knows your error, she has seen your penitence, she forgives and is willing to make you happy.—

Fred. Madam!

Mrs. C. Come, you should ere now have discovered that I am Mrs. Corbett.—But, I see shame—

Fred. (*aside*) Mrs. Corbett, good heavens! the protectress of Emma!—

Rat. I am on a bed of thorns.—(*aside*)

Mrs. C. This is no time to reproach or to remonstrate —banish your fears, for however considerable your loss may be, my fortune can repair it.—

Rat. (*aside*) I'm on a bed of roses.—What an Aunt! —If my master ma'am makes no acknowledgment, for so much goodness, believe me ma'am, 'tis nothing but shame, that shuts his mouth ma'am.—

Mrs. C. You love Emma—

Rat. Love her, ma'am, he neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps, and I verily believe the fashion's like to go thro' he family, for I'm on the point of leaving off eating and drinking myself! Love her madam! Bless ye, he's dying for her, actually at the last gasp.—But, love makes him dumb.

Mrs. C. Nephew, be more yourself—your marriage ith Emma will correct your follies and you will be appy.—

Fred. What shall I say, how answer—(*aside to Rat.*)

Rat. Say nothing or you'll spoil all: his joy keeps n silent ma'am.—

Mrs. C. But, surely my dear nephew what I say to ou, deserves some few words of affection?

Rat. Keep it up, sir,—yes ma'am and don't you see motion and gratitude in his eye, ma'am, only he can't nd words to express it.—

Fred. (*aside*) And can I deceive so excellent a wo- an?

Rat. 'Tis the only way to see your Emma!—

Fred. Ah! madam!—

Rat. Call her aunt, sir,—Sorrow ties his tongue a'am—

Fred. My—my—dear—aunt—

Rat. Down on your marrowbones!—

Fred. 'Tis on my knees I ought to—

Mrs. C. Come, come, I see your confusion—but very thing is forgotten—rise—(*embraces him.*)

Rat. Oh, the dear old sensible soul!—Ah, ma'am ou've a heart! you're the paragon of relatives—the

Phœnix of aunts!—a pattern for parents—and a model for all middle aged gentlewomen!—

Mrs. C. I leave you for a few moments to surprise you still more agreeably, I'll return immediately.—[*exit.*

Fred. Heavens! what a freak of fortune, she takes me for her nephew Dashall.—

Rat. Yes, and you went very near to *dash-all* with your modesty.—Lord, sir, what has a lover to do with modesty—that's never the way to come to the point.—

Fred. Yet to deceive so excellent a woman.

Rat. Now, sir, that's not conscience, but quibbling—you don't deceive her,—she deceives herself—and that's not lying but logic.—

Fred. But Dashall—

Rat. Let him shift for himself—depend upon't he'll not reach the Manor-house to day.—If he comes afterwards, when you've possession, you've the nine points of the law to oppose to his single point of right.—

Fred. I have scruples—

Rat. Yes, but, no money—scruples are good moral associates for a man of money—but poor companions with an empty purse—take a fool's advice, sir, and be wise for once—stick to her skirts—don't leave her—up with the hammer of your courage, sir, and strike while the iron's hot.—

Fred. If I lose this occasion, I may never see her more.—

Rat. True, sir, as Ben Johnson makes Joe Miller say in Shakspeare's Tragedy, of the Comedy of Errors says he, there is a tide in the affairs of men—now, sir, this present is your tide of good fortune, and if you lose it, you'll go wriggling on thro' the rest of your life like eels in the mud—Look yonder, sir!—

Fred. What do I see? 'tis she herself 'tis my ador'd Emma!

(*Enter* MRS. CORBETT *and* EMMA.)

Mrs. C. Now, prithee Child, dissipate your idle fears, my nephew deserves your warmest love —

Emma. Let me retire, dearest madam, the heart that once has loved, in vain, can love no more.—

Fred. In pity turn that averted eye! Behold your lover!

Emma. That voice again! oh heavens!

Rat. (*to Emma*) Miss, miss—don't be so plaguy bashful look thro' the corner of your right eye.—'Tis Captain Vincent, Miss—your lover.—

Mrs. C. (*to Emma*) Come, let me see you conquer your repugnance.

Emma. Ah! madam, if you knew—

Fred. Believe me, I had not dared present myself before you, if chance had not directed that Mrs.—Mrs.—

Rat. His aunt ma'am—that his aunt should find him here.—

Emma. His aunt!

Mrs. C. But we lose time—we must away to the Manor-house. Go friend, and prepare every thing for our departure.—

Rat. We shan't keep you waiting ma'am—our luggage is'nt great—our wardrobe very small—and our equipage is—none at all.— [*Exit.*

Fred. (*to Emma*) Do you not judge hardly of me, madam, for the culpable misfortune I have met with.—

Emma. I attribute every thing that at present appears improper in your conduct to your unfortunate passion.—

Fred. (*aside to Emma*) Dearest Emma, for heaven's sake humour this mistake, and let me see you alone, I must leave you for a few minutes to collect myself. (*aloud*) Madam, I will but hasten my servant and attend you. [*Exit.*

Mrs. C. Confess my dear Emma, that my nephew is a very fine young man!—

Emma. Certainly ma'am.—

Mrs. C. He has indeed, a fatal propensity to gaming!—
Emma. Very true, ma'am!—
Mrs. C. But that vice relinquished, you will be unjust not to love him.—
Emma. Undoubtedly, madam.—
Mrs. C. For he unfeignedly loves you—
Emma. Certainly, madam—
Mrs. C. I overheard him censuring his own folly while his only consolation was your picture.—
Emma. I'm sure he loves me—his eyes told me so.—

SONG.

Tell me by what external sign
Is faithful love express't,
Can we by language 'lone define
Or by the heaving breast,
No—for the tongue can oft impart
A language foreign to the heart,
And oft the treacherous breast can heave
With sighs that flatter to deceive.—
'Tis then alone in nature's book
The genuine symptom lies,
Its eloquence the strictest look,
Its language in the eyes.—

Enter DASHALL, *slightly intoxicated.—Mrs.* C. *and* EMMA *retire.*

Dash. (*Entering humming Robin Adair*) Harkee boy! bid 'em bring my bill—Heigho!—What an odd sort of a world this is—they say Fortune's as blind as a buzzard!—now, its my opinion, she's just undergone an operation, and has recover'd her sight to shower down luck on—

Mrs. C. This is doubtless he who has ruined Dashall.—

Dash. Zounds! how my head runs round—the things are all dancing like witches in a whirlwind—this cursed claret.—

Mrs. C. He has the appearance of a profligate libertine—(*coming forward*) The man must be destitute of feeling and honor who can ruin his friend, and then sport with his misfortune.—

Dash. Ma'am!—most obedient, Ladies—beg pardon! did'nt see you—fellow travellers I suppose!

Mrs. C. No sir—we are—

Dash. Of this house? who'd ha' thought it—who'd dream of finding two such lovely young creatures in such a pitiful place.—Ladies, I shall be proud of the smiles of either of you (*approaching Mrs. C.*) Zounds! I beg pardon ma'am, I did'nt see you were an *old* one.—

Mrs. C. Sir—this insolence to strangers—

Enter RATTLE *with a Portmanteau.*

Rat. Zounds! ruin again!—'Tis the very devil himself!

Dash. Ah, friend Rattle art thou here? Is your master reconciled to his fate? has he found comfort in contemplating his idol?

Rat. We're lost!—undone!—

Dash. Was'nt he out of his wits on seeing the miniature:—was'nt he transported to ecstacy?

Rat. Oh yes, sir—(*aside*) and I wish *you* were transported to Botany Bay.—

Emma. (*aside*) Surely this must be Dashall. (*aloud*) Let us depart madam—this young man seems intoxicated.—

Mrs. C. He spoke of a miniature—surely my nephew has not parted with yours—I must know more.—

Rat. (*aside to Dash.*) Go for heaven's sake, go sir!—these ladies are our acquaintance—we're in company.

Dash. What d'ye say—speak up man, I've a whizzing in my ears, and can't hear whispers.

Rat. He won't stir—might as well attempt to move the monument—won't you go, sir?

Dash. Go, sir—no sir!—tell the host to bring the bill, and run and saddle a horse,

Rat. We're coming to the catastrophe—pray heaven send us safe thro' it—all will be discover'd—farewell wedding—farewell dinner—farewell aunt!

Dash. Well sir! why don't you go?

Rat. What a devil of a man! ill luck's tied to his skirts and every time he sees us, he turns round and gives us a sprinkle.— [*Exit.*

Dash. Don't be surprised ladies—the fellow's angry —'tis very natural—I've ruined his master—a very particular friend of mine!—

Mrs. C. Ruined your friend! dreadful!

Dash. Not at all—nothing can be more fashionable.—

Mrs. C. You spoke sir, of a miniature.—

Dash. Oh Lord!—I'll tell you all about it.—I had lost all my money—every guinea—nothing remained but a little miniature.—

Emma. Heavens! 'tis Dashall. (*aside*)

Dash. My friend saw the picture—found it very like some lady in—in—some place, and propos'd to buy it of me:—no, says I—sell my wife!—no—but I'll play for it with all my heart—at it we go—for you must know ma'am I'm of a remarkable good natured, accommodating disposition—I'd great luck—won his money et cetera--his watch, et cetera--his curricle, et cetera and horses—et cetera, and in short all he had in the world--et cetera!--all this I owe to my miniature, and so out of pure gratitude and generosity I made him a present of it.—

Mrs. C. And what portrait might this be sir?

Dash. Why I'll tell you—

Enter RATTLE.

Rat. All's ready sir—here's your bill—horse waits, sir, won't you go? (*pokes bill in face*)

Dash. Zounds! fellow, is that your manners—when I see me in a private room with ladies—to thrust a purse—a bill I mean into my mouth—I'm in no hurry —'tis time enough—It'll always be time enough to go to my dear Mrs. Corbett's!—

Mrs. C. } Mrs. Corbett's!—
Emma. }

Dash. Yes. Mrs. Corbett's—do you know her! she's MY AUNT—

Rat. The murder's out!

Dash. A good kind of a sort of an old maid, who's dying for love of me, tho' I never saw her in my life—but fame has strained her damned strong lungs to trumpet my praise in her ears.—

Mrs. C. What sir, Mrs. Corbett *your aunt?*

Dash. Yes: d'ye know the old one? She has a Protegee, a prettyish sort of a young country bumpkin.—

Emma. Really!—

Dash. (*gets between ladies*) A little rustic—I came here to marry—don't you find I've the air of a lover, ladies?

Rat. You've the air of a hang dog—I like this—

Mrs. C. This mystery is inexplicable.—

Dash. The marriage is a match made a hundred miles off.—Ha! ha! ha! this comical old quiz of an aunt is as rich as a Jew and has a funny fancy for marrying people who care nothing about the matter.—I obey.—I marry—but, as soon as the lady and the money are mine—"good night"—says I, to old Auntee—take my wife under my arm—order my curricle, and off I go to spend her portion as politely as possible.—

Rat. His tongue will save us!

Mrs. C. (*to Rattle*) What can this mean? Is this man an impostor?

Rat. Oh, no madam! you are the impostor, ma'am, and imposed upon us by passing yourself on us for my master's aunt.—

Dash. Do you know this whimsical old aunt of mine?

Emma. Yes, sir, and every body that knows, respects and loves her—and you—if you have any sense of shame, will blush for your conduct when *you* know her.—You seek Mrs. Corbett, sir?

Dash. Yes ma'am.

Emma. She stands before you.

Mrs. C. Why undecieve him?

Dash. Oh Lord! What! you Mrs. Corbett! really! bless my soul!—here's a pretty business—adieu marriage—farewell money—and good bye aunt.

Mrs. C. Are you not ashamed, Sir, of the expressions with which you have described me?—An old maid—in love with you—an old one—

Rat. Aye—can any body say she looks like an old one?

Mrs. C. A whimsical old aunt.

Emma. I too:—a young country bumpkin—a little rustic.

Mrs. C. And I, a comical old quiz!

Rat. Very like a comical old quiz indeed!

Dash. By the Lord, ladies, you're quizzing me, I think: have a little mercy for heaven's sake.

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. (*Entering.*) Whenever my aunt wishes to depart—

Dash. Your aunt (*Goes to Fred.*) my dear fellow—you'd better say *our* aunt.

Fred. Dashall here! then all's lost.

Dash. Since you're one of the family, prithee help me to make my peace.—But how the devil my dear Frederick—

Mrs. C. How Frederick!

Rat. It's all over with us Sir.

Mrs. C. What does this mean?

Fred. (*Pushes Dashall aside.*) Madam, I own every thing—punish not a lover less culpable than unfortunate.

Dash. A lover! Oh, ho!—since you were in love with my wife—(that was to be) I no longer wonder at the miniature.

Mrs C. Emma, I could not have believed—

Emma. On my honor, I was unacquainted—

Fred. Rattle my letter—(*Rattle goes to Frederick and pushes Dashall aside.*) this letter will convince you, madam, that she was so: you will therein find what are my prétensions, and that I have not failed in the respect due to an amiable character—the friend—the more than mother of my Emma.

Dash. There the dog has her—

Rat. The tide has waited for my master, and we shall sail down the stream with flying colors, and filled with good things, like an Alderman's barge on a Lord Mayor's day. (*Goes up Stage dancing.*)

Fred. It is to your mistake I am indebted for this interview—the miniature alone—

Mrs. C. I know how you became possessed of it.

Dash. Oh Lord!—Yes! I've told all—these ladies have only talked six minutes with me, and yet they know all about me, as well as if they had lived with me all my life.

Mrs. C. Nephew, (*Going up to Dashall.*) There are some faults that are excusable in youth and inexperience—yours are not of that description—but I ought not to reproach you, since to my knowledge of your character, I owe the good fortune of preserving my Emma from a frightful calamity.

Dash. Meaning a husband!

Mrs. C. No, Sir, from a vicious character and a dissolute and unfeeling libertine.

Dash. Meaning me—upon my soul I'm very much obliged to you, madam: you seem to be a sensible person—Fred. here's an excellent fellow—He is beloved and loves—they'll petition—you'll relent—they'll entreat—you'll consent—marriage will wind up the whole and—

Mrs. C. Nephew, you are very *weak* or very *mad*.

Dash. Very *both* I believe, at your service.

Mrs. C. I fear you will never mend.

Dash. Ingenuously—I fear not.

Mrs. C. Then never marry.

Dash. You're right—I'll maintain my freedom, that I may keep my good humour.—Marriage, is a damper to mirth—a wet blanket to wit—and a dark dive into a bath full of misfortunes, of which no man knows the bottom.—If Frederick marries—if he continues my friend—if Miss Emma forgives me, and above all, if some day or other, you pardon me, I shall console myself under all my misfortunes, crosses and losses, and remain my dear aunt, your very humble servant, and most dutiful nephew, Richard Dashall, et cetera, &c. &c.

[*Exit.*

Emma. In the countenance of my dear protectress I read encouragement to hope.

Mrs. C. Your happiness, is alone my object and I do not believe I shall here find any cause to interrupt it.

Rat. Sir—I hope you'll draw one conclusion from all that is past—namely, that upon every pressing occasion your wisest and best plan will be to shut your eyes, and let me guide you.—You may talk of pilots, Sir, but he's the most dexterous, who can steer a vessel thro' opposing storms and dangerous quicksands, and pilot it safely into the port of matrimony.

FINALE.

Fred. and Emma.

Tho' thus at last our hearts at ease,
Your frowns our fancy haunt;
Condemn the Nephew, if you please
But pray applaud "My Aunt."

CHORUS.

Tho' thus at last, &c. &c.

Rattle.

Attend if you like it, or not, to their prattle,
You all in your times have been fond of a rattle,
For Aunt or for Nephew, I care not a grain,
But pray you, let Rattle, oft Rattle again.

CHORUS.

Tho' thus at last, &c.

THE END.

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